Change of Use
Supporting Statement

20695_P501



Conversion of Former Sunday Schools to 'Happy Beeginnings' Day Nursery

Long Street Methodist Church and School
Long Street
Middleton Nr Rochdale
M24 5UE

April 2022
Revision P04

1.0 Site Location

The site is located directly to the north-east of the Middleton Town Centre core. The site sits within an urban block which is bounded by Long Street to the east, Durnford Street to the north and Lever Street to the west.

The Church is located to the northern section of the site and the former Sunday School is located along the western and southern boundary forming a central courtyard fronting Long Street. A pedestrian access is located directly off Long Street with vehicular access provided off Lever Street.



Site Location Plan

2.0 Long Street Methodist Church and School

Long Street Methodist Church and School dates from the 1899 and is a Grade II* Listed Building as designated by Historic England. The church and school were designed by noted 20th Century Arts and Crafts architect, Edgar Wood and has been on Historic Englands Heritage at Risk Register since 2014.

Although the Church continues its original use with a dedicated congregation who provide voluntary assistance in running and maintaining the buildings, until more recently, the Sunday School was not in use for many years. Although attempts were made to generate income through the use of the spaces for community use, the building was under utilised due to severe damp issues, a delapidated heating system, poor quality amenities and water ingress.

Following extensive work by the congregation, The Greater Manchester Building Preservation Trust and the Edgar Wood Society to establish a viable long term use for the building, in 2017 funding was secured as part of the wider Rochdale Townscape Heritage Inititative awarded by the Heritage Lottery Fund (now National Lottery Heritage Fund or NLHF) fior the restoration of the former Sunday School which formed the last project to be completed within the THI works.

In order to secure the future of the buildings and to ensure long term investment in their maintenance, an alternative use was required that respects the historical significance of the building whilst creating a regular revenue to secure the building for the future. The Business Case submitted to the NLHF application for approval of the funding stated that possible future uses of the building could be either events and community use or a day nursery/school use.

The works to restore the former School were completed in 2018 and included restoration of the external envelope including the roof areas, reinstatement of lime render, brick repairs and repointing and stonework repairs, new WC's along with the installation of new mechancial and electrical services including new heating throughout. Following completion of the main restoration works project, the Greater Manchester Building Preservation Trust have raised further funds to enable the installation of a commercial kitchen.

3.0 Previously approved change of use application (Reference : 17/01310/FUL)

The previously approved change of use excludes the Church which is to remain in its current use.

The approved use of the former Sunday School was for the following uses :-

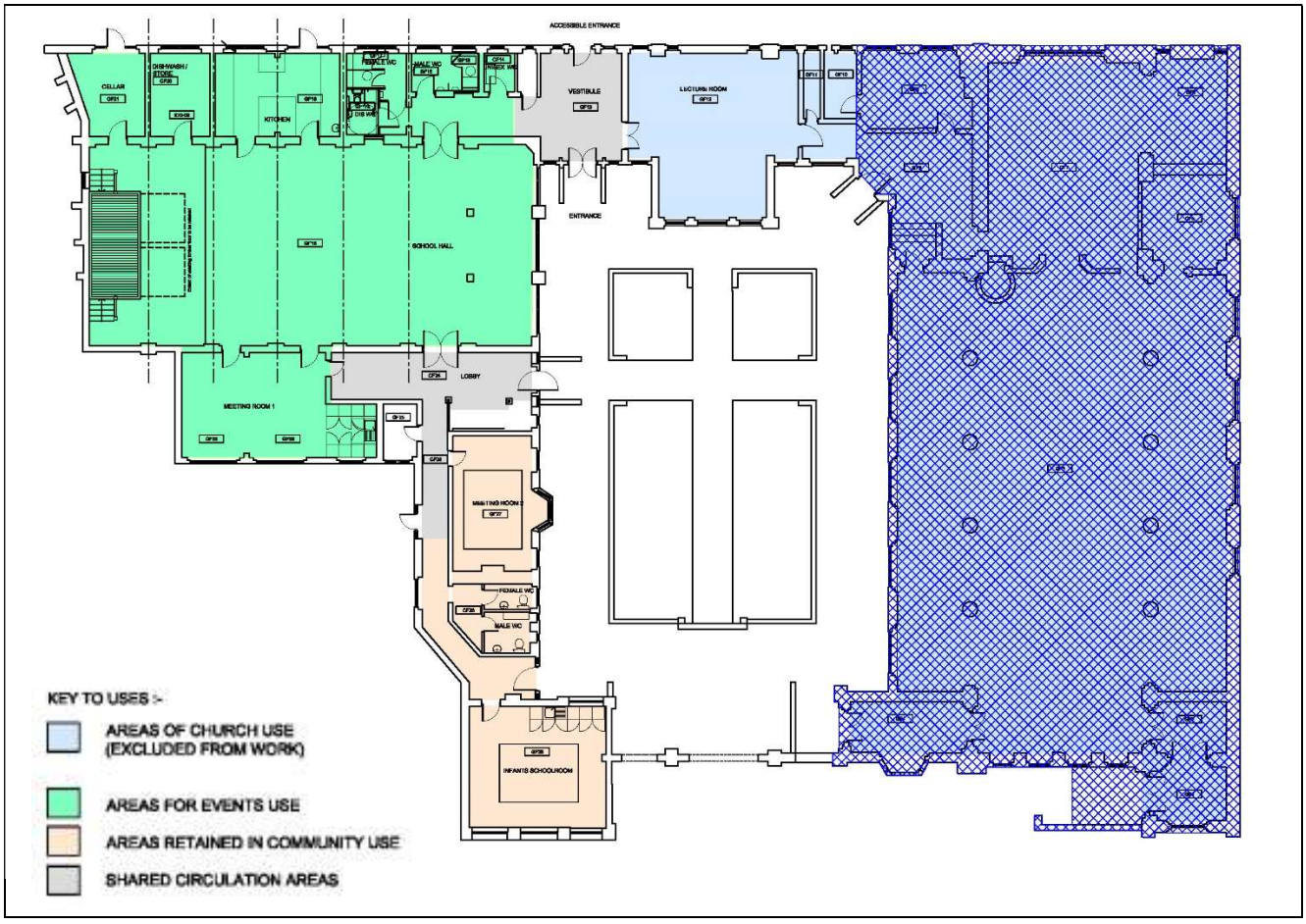
- The west wing including the Main School Hall was to be used for a variety of uses including weddings, christenings, large scale conferences and various events. A new commercial kitchen was to be installed to serve the Main School Hall. The existing WC's within the west wing were reconfigured to increase the provision and an application was to be made for a licence to undertake Civil Service weddings within the Lecture Room. Jubilee Catering (who also operate at The Old Grammar School in Middleton) were intending to be manage the large scale events provision.

- The east wing was to be utilised as a separate Community suite of rooms incorporating 3 No Meeting Rooms with dedicated WC facilities. The existing entrance doors to the courtyard are to be utilised to provide a separate dedicated access to the Community rooms.

The description of the above Change of Use application as it appears on the Change of Use Approval is as follows :-

"Change of use of school buildings to a mixed use comprising existing church, school and community uses plus additional conference and event facilities (including weddings, wedding receptions and other events) together with external alterations including service door in western elevation, installation of two new roof doors, erection of three replica canopies above courtyard doors, demolition of existing garage and provision of new external service yard on Lever Street including associated boundary treatment."

The following plan illustrates the areas allocated for each use under this Change of Use approval.



4.0 Events since completion of the restoration works

The 2019 Covid pandemic has had a significant impact on the hospitality industry globally and as a result, led to the now restored building being under utilised between March 2019 – December 2021. During this period, the licencing act for weddings has also been amended, allowing weddings to be held in any location and not confined by those

with licences in place. This has had a significant impact on the demand for formal wedding venues which has led Jubilee and the Greater Manchester Building Preservation Trust to rethink the future use of the building to ensure its long-term protection and ongoing use.

5.0 Proposed Change of Use

As the demand for wedding venues has significantly reduced since the change in UK Marriage Laws, Jubilee have reconsidered their business model and looked at alternative uses for the Long Street Former Sunday Schools alongside the Greater Manchester Building Preservation Trust. Given that the building were originally designed as a Sunday School and there is a current high demand for Nursery spaces in the Middleton area, Jubilee (now known as Gerall Ltd) have decided to change their business model to deliver Day Nursery provision at Long Street Former Schools. This will enable the Former Sunday Schools to be brought back into its original intended use. This will have a positive impact on the building by bringing it back into full-time use, ensuring that it is managed on a daily basis and that continuous long-term maintenance is undertaken. This will also reduce the reliance on the Church volunteers and Greater Manchester Building Preservation Trust to manage the building in the long-term.

The following plan illustrates the areas allocated for each use under this Change of Use approval.

